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ABSTRACT

This is the first publication in a series of three reports that summarize the results of Ohio's Javits Project, a 3-year federally sponsored program to improve the identification of and services to young economically disadvantaged gifted children in 25 Ohio schools. The report focuses on the project's first year's activities. It describes the advisory committee formation, purpose, functions, and membership, which includes parents, teachers, university personnel, professional association leaders, state department personnel, and community groups. The site selection process is reviewed. Building teams, consisting of the principal, gifted coordinator, gifted teacher and two regular classroom teachers, and a parent, are described, as are the community awareness meetings held at each school. The needs assessment process, involving structured interviews with 42 parents, 25 principals, 21 teachers, and 28 community leaders, is reviewed. Among best practices suggested for similar projects are the importance of being inclusive in creating advisory committees and building teams and allowing for flexibility in project design. Appendices includes an Ohio Javits Grant abstract, a list of participating buildings and sites, a list of advisory committee members and Javits project staff, and an executive summary of the needs assessment. (CR)

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Windows of Opportunity

Laying the Foundation

Ohio's Comprehensive Inservice Training Project for the Identification of and Provision of Services to Young Gifted Children Who Are Economically Disadvantaged

EC 305121

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April 1996

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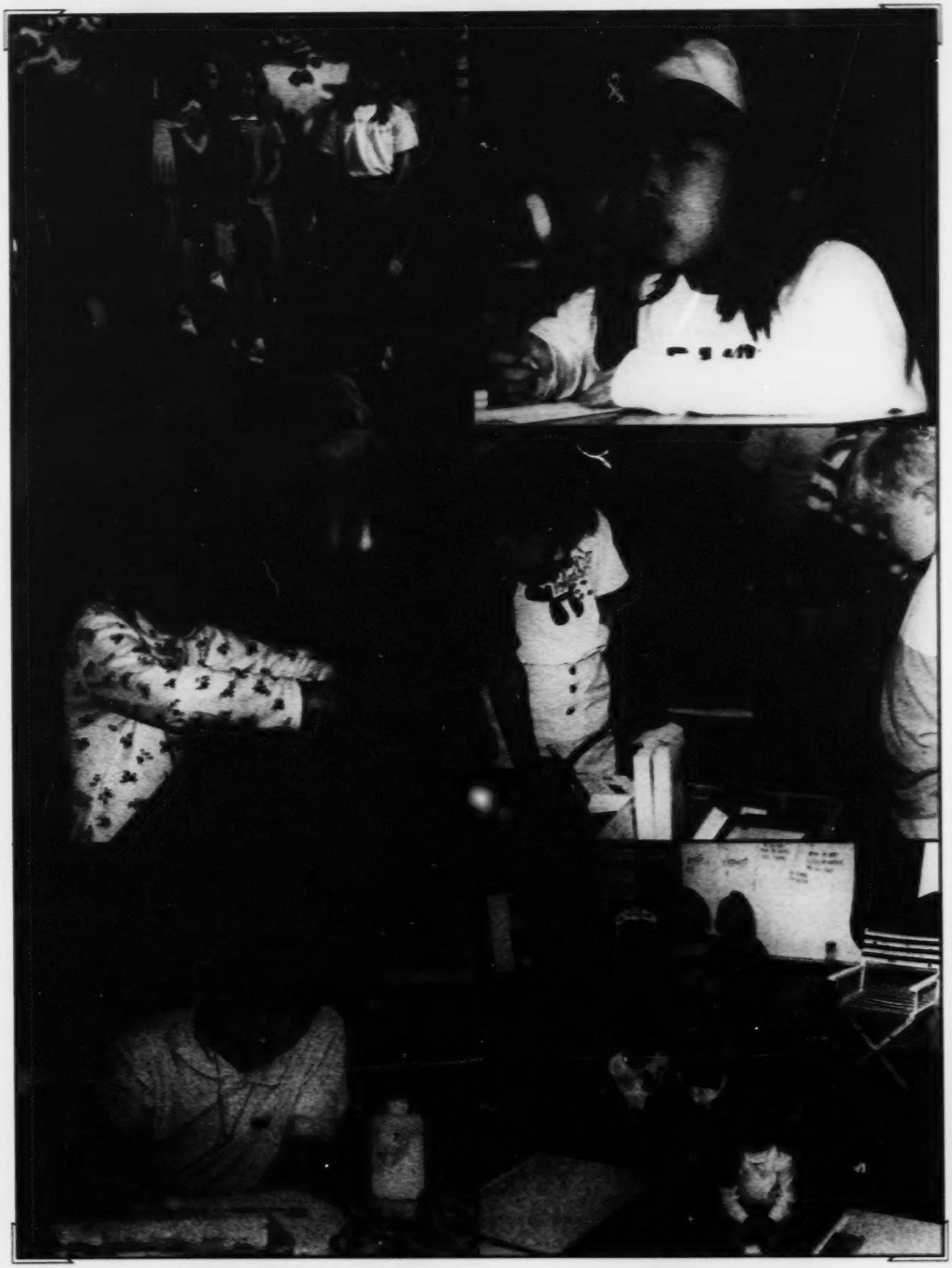

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State of Ohio
Department of Education
Ohio Departments Building, Room 810, 65 South Front Street, Columbus 43215-4183

John M. Goff
Superintendent of Public Instruction

April 1996

Dear Colleagues:

As educators, our goal is to provide rich learning opportunities that make the most effective use of the instructional time available to *all* of Ohio's school children. Meeting this challenge requires a strong combination of committed and qualified teachers, relevant curriculum, meaningful support services, and nurturing environments, all designed to ensure the academic, social, and physical development of each child entrusted to our care. The active involvement of families and community members is equally important in maximizing this *window of opportunity* that is each child's school career.

We are all aware of the barriers — attitudinal and fiscal — that can impede on the delivery of appropriate services to children. Compounding these barriers for gifted youngsters is the fact that kindergarten-through-grade three children, especially those in difficult economic situations, are typically underserved in gifted programs across the nation. There is a desperate need to develop methods that not only recognize the potential of each child, but also lead to the differentiation and individualization of instruction to meet each child's educational needs.

Ohio's Comprehensive Inservice Training Program for the Identification of and Provision of Services to Young Gifted Children Who Are Economically Disadvantaged — Ohio's Javits Project — offers a viable model for meeting the critical needs of a frequently overlooked population of children.

Windows of Opportunity: Laying the Foundation is the first of three publications resulting from Ohio's Javits Project. This three-year project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, represented a concerted effort to meet the needs of gifted learners who are too often overlooked in the educational setting.

As we look ahead to the challenges of a new century, our mission will be to ensure that public education in Ohio represents, at a minimum, a *window of opportunity* in the lives of all Ohio children and their families.

Sincerely,

John Goff
Superintendent of Public Instruction

PREFACE

Whether one looks at business, industry, nonprofit organizations, government, or education, the view is of ongoing change. Systems thinking, lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and total quality management are all attempts at humanizing organizations, while maximizing their performance.

The emphasis on participatory processes, accentuating diversity, and being inclusive of all ideas and approaches characterizes such organizational change initiatives. The models that we develop today are not static. Instead, they change and adapt to the environments in which they operate.

Ohio is working to promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning to ensure that students leave Ohio schools with the academic and vocational skills needed for lifelong learning and success.

The guiding principles that underlie this call for improvement in Ohio's education system are reflected in the following State Board of Education beliefs and commitments:

- All students can learn, and all students *will* learn if the conditions for learning are right.
- We hold high expectations for *all* students.
- A quality education is the responsibility of students, families, teachers, administrators, support personnel, and school boards working in partnership with individuals and organizations in the local community for the benefit of all.
- Public education must be relevant and prepare students to excel in a technological, information-based society.
- Public education will improve and be accountable for communicating progress in clear terms with the public.
- We must lead a long-term effort for positive change and encourage creative educational alternatives to increase student achievement.
- We must develop proactive positions and target priorities and resources to accomplish both our vision and mission.

If all students *can* learn, why aren't all students succeeding in our schools? An awareness of the factors that impact on learning — learning and teaching style, cultural differences, multiple intelligences, ability level, readiness skills, pace of learning, student interests, and the availability of resources — leads to the realization that one curriculum or method of instruction cannot meet the needs of all children. Our task is to design and adapt curriculum and instruction to meet the individual needs of each youngster as he or she changes and grows.

Ohio's Javits Project embraced the beliefs outlined above, both in its design and in its implementation, by focusing on two traditionally underserved groups of children in gifted education — those who are young *and* economically disadvantaged. The need for alternative methods of identification, and the need to provide a full range of services to meet students' needs, have been documented by Ohio research and demonstration/model projects.[1]

The *Windows of Opportunity* series explores the roles that teachers, administrators, families, and students played in improving learning opportunities for all children. Participation, partnership, involvement, and awareness are the watchwords that characterize Ohio's Javits Project.

Laying the Foundation

The first publication in the series, *Windows of Opportunity: Laying the Foundation*, addresses the conditions that allowed for continuous improvement in teaching and learning to occur. Administrative tasks, such as selecting project sites, recruiting building teams, creating an advisory team, and conducting a needs assessment, are described.

Teaming for Learning

Windows of Opportunity: Teaming for Learning — the second in the series — details the processes used by project teams to create a shared vision for improving student performance, the professional development provided to project teams to support them in their efforts to identify and serve gifted youngsters, and the strategies used to "institutionalize" these changes.

Changes from Within

The final document in the series, *Windows of Opportunity: Changes from Within*, shares information about the successes of the project teams in improving identification and service delivery practices. Best practices in differentiating instruction to meet individual learner needs are provided.

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[1] *Navigating the Waters of Change*. (Columbus: Ohio Department of Education, 1996), p. 25.

INTRODUCTION

Between October 1, 1992 and March 30, 1995, the U.S. Department of Education provided funding to the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Special Education, to improve identification of and services to young (K-3) gifted children who are economically disadvantaged.

The Ohio Javits Project, officially titled *Ohio's Comprehensive Inservice Training Program for the Identification of and Provision of Services to Young Gifted Children Who Are Economically Disadvantaged*, was to develop a model to provide parents, teachers, and administrators with the necessary knowledge and skills to address their community's concerns regarding the targeted population (see Appendix A).

The first year of the grant was spent on creating a team, increasing community awareness of the characteristics and needs of gifted students, and conducting a needs assessment of each of the participating buildings.

Year two focused on providing professional development regarding the use of alternative methods for identifying the needs of gifted and talented children, while year three addressed the delivery of services to meet identified needs. Strategies for infusing project activities into the school structure on a long-term basis were also provided during year three.

The Project involved 25 principal-led building teams (see Appendix B) in five sites.

Creating a Team

The rate of change and the complexity of problems in our everyday lives have given rise to a debate over the effectiveness of individual action. Collective action in the form of teams has become increasingly popular in government, business, and nonprofit organizations. Cooperative efforts that recognize multiple perspectives are seen as a new paradigm for the postmodern age (Finger, 1995).

The metaphor of the organization as a machine has been replaced by a new metaphor such as the web, brain, and vines (Morgan, 1986). At the same time, the need to easily cross both vertical and horizontal barriers in order to share information has been realized. Systems thinking is replacing the Taylor concept of breaking tasks into their smallest components (Senge, 1990).

The emphasis on cooperation rather than competition, inclusion rather than exclusivity, openness to multiple perspectives rather than a single perspective, and continuous learning rather than bounded learning, guided the design of the Ohio Javits Project.

The fundamental goal of the Project was to improve identification and service delivery to meet the needs of the targeted population utilizing, as fully as possible, local resources. The Ohio Department of Education used the federal grant as a means of empowering teachers, parents, administrators, and students to conduct their own exploration and discovery of what worked and what didn't in their local community. An advisory committee was formed to help plan and direct project activities.

Advisory Committee

An advisory committee — comprised of parents, teachers, university personnel, professional association leaders, state department personnel, and community groups — was created in October 1992 and held its first meeting in November 1992.

Twelve quarterly meetings were held during the life of the Project. Originally the advisory committee consisted of 28 members. The committee was expanded to 38 members at the end of the second project year when parents and five classroom teachers joined the committee, providing a stronger voice from building team members.

The advisory committee acted as the management team and met on a quarterly basis to oversee project implementation and evaluation, make mid-course adjustments, and ensure that the Project met its goals and overall intent. The membership of the committee (see Appendix C) reflected the desire to involve as many stakeholders as possible.

Site Selection

Selection of buildings within the five designated geographic areas occurred early in the first project year.

School districts throughout the state were asked to indicate their interest in participating in the Project during the proposal writing stage. From those that responded, five geographic sites in Ohio with exceptionally large populations of economically disadvantaged students were selected to participate in the Project.

Three urban sites (Akron City Schools, Toledo City Schools, and Youngstown City Schools), one urban/Appalachian site (Cincinnati City Schools) and one rural/Appalachian site involving three districts — Alexander Local Schools, Federal Hocking Local Schools, and Nelsonville-York City Schools — located in Athens County comprised Ohio's Javits Project sites.

Once the districts were selected, superintendents from each site identified buildings with the highest rate of student participation in the free and reduced lunch program (see Appendix B). Once the 25 buildings were selected, project teams were formed.

Building Teams

The original plan called for each building to create a principal-led team consisting of six members — the principal, the gifted coordinator, the gifted teacher, two regular classroom teachers, and a parent. The two regular classroom teachers were to work as a teacher dyad (e.g., K-1, 1-2, 2-3) to ensure continuity and communication across grade levels as the child moved through the school program.

However, in reality, local circumstances dictated team membership. Very few of the buildings operated a gifted program or had on staff anyone licensed as a teacher of the gifted and talented. Teacher dyads were difficult to create and even more difficult to maintain since staff reorganizations occurred each fall. Many of the teams elected to increase parental involvement by including an additional parent team member.

Staff turnover was a constant issue that had to be addressed by building teams over the three years of the Project. Building principals changed in nine of the 25 project buildings, representing a 36 percent turnover rate for building administrator team members. At least 33 of the 125 teachers and parents changed, reflecting a 26 percent change in team membership.

Several of the buildings changed philosophical approaches, adopting a Montessori or Paideia model, while one building in Youngstown — Roosevelt Elementary — closed at the of the 1993-94 school year. Teachers who left project buildings were extended invitations to continue to participate in staff development in order to spread awareness to other buildings.

Javits Support Staff

The Ohio Department of Education, in cooperation with the School Study Council of Ohio (SSCO), provided support to the building teams. The Javits staff consisted of one full-time project coordinator, a half-time graduate research associate, and one full- and one half-time office associate (see Appendix D). The Ohio Department of Education also contributed the time of the project director and another consultant. The evaluation of the grant was conducted under the direction of Dr. Thomas M. Stephens, SSCO executive director.

A major project activity was the employment of Javits Project staff. The position of graduate research associate was filled on October 1, 1992 through a cooperative arrangement with SSCO and The Ohio State University. A full-time office assistant was also in place on October 1, 1992, and another office associate (part-time) was hired in January of 1993. Due to new hiring procedures and job posting requirements, the coordinator position was not filled until June of 1993. Like the building teams, the Javits staff also experienced turnover. The coordinator and the part-time office associate left the Project seven months early.

The changes in building team membership and Javits staff membership reflect the transitions that occurred throughout the Project.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS MEETINGS

Community awareness meetings were held for all 25 buildings during the months of January, February, and March of 1993. Schools were encouraged to hold these meetings in sites that were convenient to parents and likely to increase participation of the targeted audience. Meetings were held in public libraries, community centers, and school buildings.

Immediately following the school day, a *teacher awareness meeting* was held for all primary-level teachers. Later in the evening, a *community awareness meeting* was held for parents of primary-age children. Training was provided to 317 parents and 262 teachers. Stipends were paid to parents who attended the community awareness meetings, and to teachers who attended teacher awareness meetings.

The community awareness meetings were structured to involve actively the attendees in decision-making roles. A simulation activity developed by John Rader was modified for use during the meetings. The object of the one-hour activity was to increase participants' awareness of the (1) inappropriateness of IQ tests as the primary gifted identification criterion, and (2) dilemma in selecting students for participation in gifted programs. Participants were given educational, social, and psychological information on six students and asked to select three for the only remaining openings in the gifted and talented program in their school.

It was important that both parents and teachers be in a decision-making role even during this preliminary exercise because it was from this group that parent and teacher members were recruited for the project's building teams. These parents and teachers, as "front line" members, were most familiar with the students and best able to serve as their advocates.

The *Business Roundtable* (1989) identified ten key components necessary to support school restructuring, recognizing the critical involvement of parents as advocates for improving student performance. The *Business Roundtable* called for every child to have an advocate, and urged that the family be strengthened, describing parents as the best source of help to their children. Without the active involvement of families there would be no modification of the regular education environment to meet the needs of gifted and talented students.

In addition to participating in the Rader simulation, participants discussed characteristics of young gifted children, how children can be identified as gifted, and how services could be provided.

Not only did these meetings increase awareness of gifted students' characteristics and educational needs, they also provided a vehicle for recruiting parents and teachers to serve on the building teams. Teachers were selected by the building principals, based on their interest and willingness to participate in the Project.

Principals were asked to involve parents who had children in the target population as building team members. Recruitment of parents, particularly from economically disadvantaged populations, was difficult. Issues involving child care, transportation, job schedules, time constraints, the level of literacy of parents, and the lack of experience or comfort in being involved with schools were just a few of the barriers encountered in involving parents as project team members.

In order to overcome some of these deterrents, parents were viewed as equal partners. They received stipends whenever teacher members were paid stipends or substitutes were employed. While the amount of the stipend was not large, it was sufficient to help cover the costs of child care or transporta-

tion. Child care was also provided during the community awareness meetings to encourage parents to attend and participate.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment was conducted during the visits to the five sites for community and teacher awareness meetings that involved structured interviews with 42 parents, 25 principals, 21 teachers, and 28 community leaders.[1] The purpose of conducting a needs assessment was to establish a base line level of understanding of issues related to identification, service delivery, and the educational needs of gifted children.

Principals were asked to provide demographic information such as enrollment by grade level and gender, ethnic makeup of the student population, the number of identified gifted youngsters, the gender and ethnic breakdown of the identified gifted students, and the number of students participating in the free and reduced lunch program.

Principals and teachers were asked for information on the identification of children as gifted, the involvement of parents, how services were provided, the operating definition of giftedness, the availability of community resources, and community awareness of the need for services for gifted students.

Parents were asked questions about parenting in general, the activities they participate in with their child, their involvement with the schools, and the types of training they would like to receive from the Project. Community leaders were asked questions regarding community attitudes toward the school, gifted education, what community resources were available, and the level of community support for education.

A structured interview was developed because multiple interviewers were involved in the needs assessment process. Structured interviews ensured that the same questions were being asked of all interviewees.

From the results of the structured interviews, an individual report was developed for each site, as well as an executive summary that described all five sites (see Appendix E).

Interviewers often interpreted questions differently and/or emphasized different questions during the structured interview, making it difficult to complete a report. Gathering accurate demographic information from the buildings was also problematic.

The problems of emphasizing different questions or interpreting questions differently could have been lessened by providing more training for interviewers and by field testing the structured interview process. Since all of the interviewers were readily available to the person compiling the results, follow-up meetings helped to clarify the notes and answers recorded during the interview sessions.

During the structured interviews, principals were given a survey sheet that was to be completed and mailed back to the Javits staff. The number of total students enrolled did not, at times, match the total number of students reported by gender or ethnic background. Many schools also found it difficult to provide free and reduced lunch program information. Follow-up telephone calls to the

[1] *Structured Interview Guides for Ohio Javits Grant Needs Assessment* is available from the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Special Education.

principals by the Javits staff, and visits from the gifted coordinators, did help to resolve many of the discrepancies. However, due to building-level staff turnover and the closure of one building, it was impossible to reconcile discrepancies in five of the building reports.

A Framework for Change

Continuous improvement is the ongoing process of increasing the quality of educational programs and services to ensure that students' learning needs are being met. In order for continuous improvement to occur, there must be continuous learning within the organization and this learning must be shared throughout the organization.

One shortcoming of organizations is the lack of central repositories of knowledge to capture learnings as organizations engage in continuous improvement efforts (Senge, 1990). The need for a central repository of knowledge is especially important in public schools that experience high rates of mobility among both students and staff.

Each project building team was the local repository of knowledge, and the advisory committee served as the project repository. By involving all stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of project activities, avenues were created that crossed both vertical and horizontal barriers. A series of best practices is offered for others who are interested in conducting their own continuous improvement efforts.

Best Practices

- Be inclusive in creating your advisory committees and/or teams. Involve all stakeholders.
- Allow for flexibility in your project design. The Project should incorporate emerging patterns and information as new learning occurs.
- Utilize diversity in people, philosophies, cultures, styles, interests, and intelligences as a means of generating multiple approaches to solving problems.
- Involve teachers and parents as invaluable resources in developing new and alternative approaches to meeting children's learning needs. Time must be allotted for them to meet and work together, and their efforts need to be recognized and supported.
- Create ownership and permanency beyond the project's funding period by using local teams and by empowering members to be designers and planners, rather than just implementers.
- Use advisory committees as management reality checks and to keep project staff on track in meeting the project goals.
- Recruit members who are interested and motivated to participate in the Project, rather than assigning staff. Voluntary participation should be emphasized.
- Create teams large enough to allow for some continuity as members come and go. Use mobility to spread the learnings of the Project by keeping members involved in professional development and project activities even though they have transferred to other buildings.

- Treat parents as equal members of the team. If others are being compensated for time and effort, compensate parents.
- Help parents find solutions to overcome deterrents to participation. Provide child care, meet in arenas that are comfortable and accessible for parents, provide development of skills so that they can participate equally in project activities, and accommodate — as much as possible — schedules that make meeting during the school day difficult.
- Provide adequate time for training of staff and field testing of instruments for conducting needs assessment.
- Capitalize on the team's spirit of enthusiasm and advocacy for their students to spark carryover of services and strategies to subsequent grade levels and/or buildings.

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Appendix A: Ohio Javits Grant Abstract

The intent of this Project is to improve methods for identifying and providing services to young (K-3) gifted children who are economically disadvantaged through the development of a replicable inservice training model.

The Project targets five sites in Ohio with exceptionally large populations of economically disadvantaged students: three urban sites (Youngstown City, Akron City, and Toledo City schools), one urban/Appalachian site (Cincinnati City Schools), and one Appalachian site (Alexander Local Schools, Federal Hocking Local Schools, and Nelsonville-York City Schools).

Specifically, the Project will

(a) Increase parents' involvement in their children's education by creating widespread community/parent awareness of the needs and characteristics of young gifted children;

(b) Provide inservice training to elementary teaching staff in improving individualized instruction within the regular classroom to accommodate young gifted children; and

(c) Provide intensive training over the course of two years to 25 (five buildings within each of the five sites) principal-led building teams in the identification of and provision of appropriate services to young gifted children who are economically disadvantaged. A parent of a gifted child will be a full member of each team.

Replication of the project model will be facilitated through ongoing dissemination of relevant information and through a national action seminar held for state education agency (SEA) personnel whose primary responsibility lies in the area of gifted education.

This Project targets key components of school restructuring at state and national levels in the areas of (1) achieving significantly higher levels of performance from all students, (2) assuring that every child has an advocate, and (3) empowering school-based staff to play a major role in instructional decision making.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is in a unique position to provide the type of leadership and technical assistance needed to support meaningful educational change at the local school district level. ODE can facilitate interagency collaboration to improve educational programs for gifted youngsters, creating partnerships between schools and such statewide organizations as the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators, the Ohio Parent and Teacher Association (PTA), and the Ohio Council of Urban League Directors.

Dissemination of best practices on a state and national basis can best be achieved through the SEA. Equally important, this Project will strengthen ODE's capacity to establish a regional structure for providing preservice and inservice training programs in the area of gifted education.

Appendix B: Participating Buildings and Sites

Athens Area Schools

Alexander Elementary School
5149 Alton Street
Albany, Ohio 45710

Amesville Elementary School
State Route 329 North
Amesville, Ohio 45711

Coolville Elementary School
Main Street
Coolville, Ohio 45723

Nelsonville Elementary School
Pinegrove Drive
Nelsonville, Ohio 45764

York Elementary School
1 Buckeye Drive
Nelsonville, Ohio 45764

Akron City Schools

Barrett Academy
888 Jonathan Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44306

Erie Island Montesorri School
1532 Peckham Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44320

Glover Elementary School
935 Hammel Street
Akron, Ohio 44306

Harris Elementary School
959 Dayton Street
Akron, Ohio 44310

Stewart Primary School
1199 Wooster Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44307

Cincinnati City Schools

Heberle Elementary School
2015 Freeman Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45214

Roll Hill Elementary School
2411 Baltimore Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45225

Sayler Park Elementary School
6700 Home City Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45233

Silverton Elementary School
6829 Stewart Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

South Avondale Elementary School
636 Prospect Place
Cincinnati, Ohio 45229

Toledo City Schools

Cherry Elementary School
3348 Cherry Street
Toledo, Ohio 43608

Fulton Elementary School
333 Melrose Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43610

Navarre Elementary School
410 Navarre Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43605

Sherman Elementary School
731 Sherman Street
Toledo, Ohio 43608

Stewart Elementary School
707 Avondale Avenue
Toledo, Ohio 43602

Youngstown City Schools

Cleveland Elementary School
621 West Princeton
Youngstown, Ohio 44511

Harding Primary Elementary School
1903 Cordova
Youngstown, Ohio 44504

John White Elementary School
1061 Lyden Avenue
Youngstown, Ohio 44505

Roosevelt Elementary School
(closed at the end of the 94-95 school year)
1408 Riby Street
Youngstown, Ohio 44506

Williamson Primary Elementary School
58 Williamson Avenue
Youngstown, Ohio 44507

Appendix C: Advisory Committee Members

Sue Amidon, Past President
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Cathe Blower, Teacher
Federal Hocking Local Schools

Robert Bray, Principal
Alexander Local Schools

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Youngstown

Debra Henry, Parent
Toledo

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Youngstown

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Akron

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Appendix E: Needs Assessment: Executive Summary

Twenty-five elementary school buildings in the following districts participated in Ohio's Javits Project: Akron City (five buildings), Alexander Local (one building), Cincinnati City (five buildings), Federal Hocking Local (two buildings), Nelsonville-York City (two buildings), Toledo City (five buildings) and Youngstown City (five buildings). Each building operated a principal-led team with one to two parents, two to three regular classroom teachers, the gifted/talented program teacher (if the building had such a position), and the district's gifted/talented coordinator, as members.

The Project targeted children in grades K-3 who traditionally are not identified as gifted and who, therefore, do not receive services. Needs assessment activities included awareness training on gifted education for 317 parents and 250 teachers, a survey of 262 teachers, and structured interviews with 42 parents, 25 principals, 21 teachers, and 28 community leaders.

The Toledo City School District and the Youngstown City School District designated a school for gifted programs. In the other districts, eight buildings offered some type of program for gifted education. Seven buildings reported having no programs for gifted students.

Student Profile at the Beginning of the Project

The total number of children enrolled in the 25 project buildings in the fall of 1993 was 11,862. Of these youngsters, only 631 students or 5% had been identified as gifted, well below Ohio's average of 13 percent. Similarly, only 4% or 301 of the 7,578 students in grades K-3, were identified as gifted.

The ethnic make-up of the student population enrolled in the participating buildings was 54% African American; 43% Caucasian; 2% Hispanic; .4% Asian; and .6% other. The Hispanic population was located primarily in Toledo and Youngstown. Four percent of the African American students (230/6345), 7% of the Hispanic students (24/357), 7% of the Caucasian students (359/5055), 18% of the Asian students (9/50) and 16% of students classified as "other" (9/55) were identified as gifted.

The participation of students in the free and reduced lunch program ranged from a low of 54% to a high of 79% across project buildings.

Teacher Profile at the Beginning of the Project

Two hundred and sixty-two teachers responded to the project survey. Although only two respondents were teachers certified in gifted education, 68 teachers (26%) reported having some training in gifted education — eight (3%) at the preservice level and 34 (13%) at the inservice level. The teachers expressed a need for more training in current and alternative identification methods, critical thinking, assessment of upper-range students, and use of technology. Teachers expressed a preference for modeling and experiential learning as the method of inservice.

Parent Interviews

All of the parents interviewed reported being involved in activities with their children, the most popular being library reading programs and family outings. Reading with or to their children was a common activity among the parents.

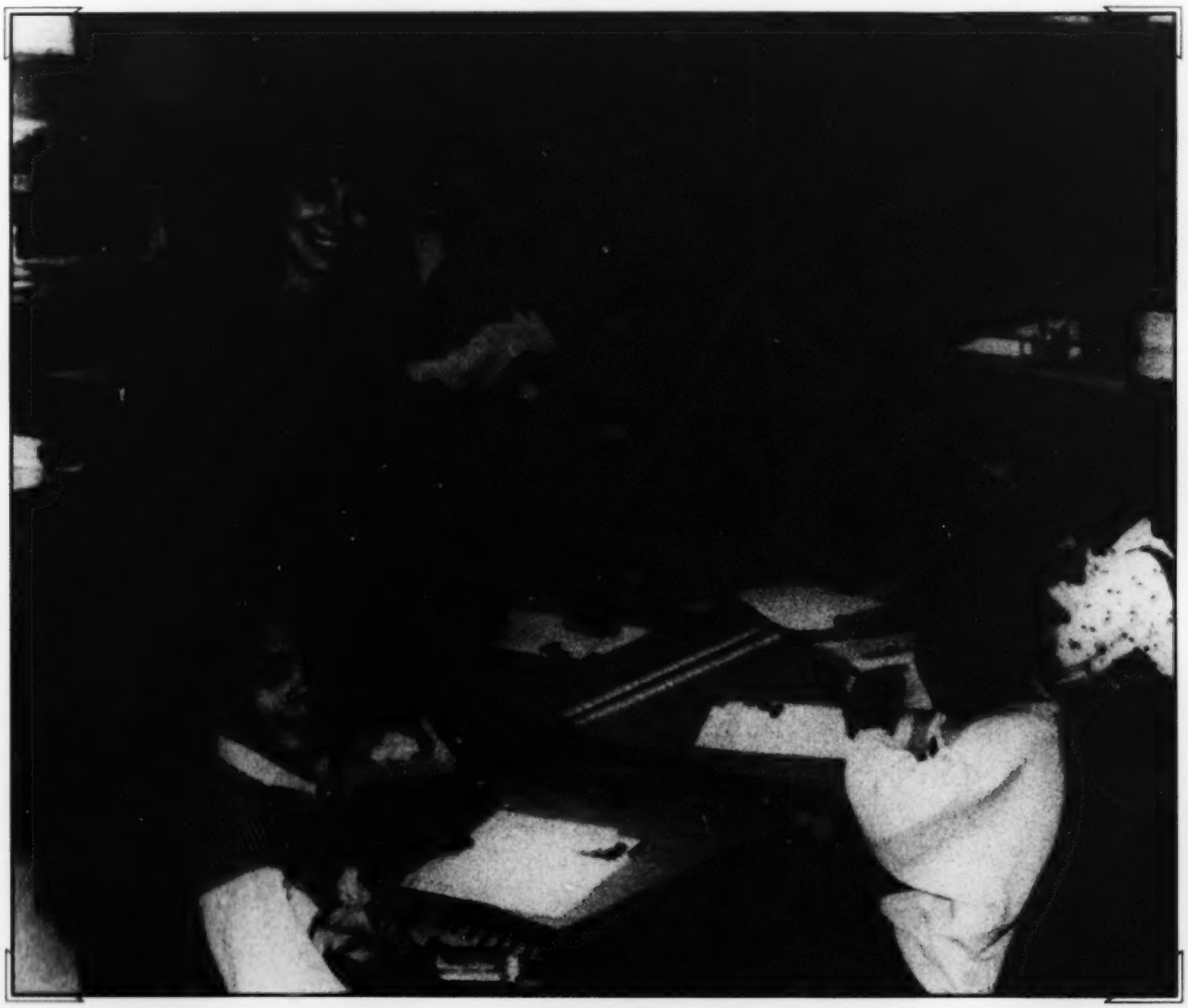
Major concerns or frustrations expressed by parents centered around not having the time or money to meet the demands or needs of their children. Concern for the safety of their children was also common among the parents.

Perceived Needs for Inservice

Parents expressed the need for strong advocacy on behalf of gifted/talented students, and a desire to create parents groups in each site.

Overall, parents reported that their children displayed a probing inquisitive nature, long attention span, keen observation skills, and sensitivity to others.

Administrators, parents, and teachers expressed an interest in portfolio assessment, alternative identification strategies, differentiating curriculum (including compacting/extending), and the use of technology in the classroom.



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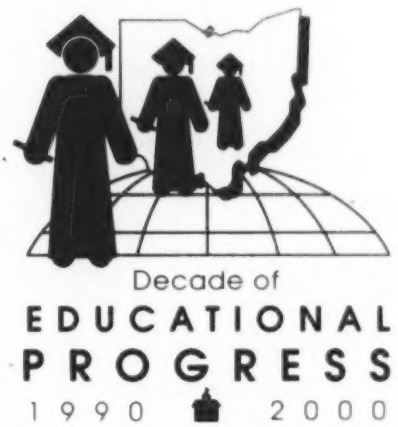

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